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Photo courtesy of the NCMA

Valerie Hillings

Director, North Carolina Museum of Art

Valerie Hillings became director of the North Carolina Museum of Art (NCMA) in November 2018. Prior to joining the NCMA, she received her B.A. in art history from Duke University and her M.A. and Ph.D. in art history from the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University. Since 2004 she has held senior positions for the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and Foundation and worked on projects for museums in its global constellation—Guggenheim Museum Bilbao; Deutsche Guggenheim, Berlin; Guggenheim Hermitage Museum, Las Vegas; and the Peggy Guggenheim Collection, Venice—and with partner institutions in Australia, Europe, and the Middle East.

During her tenure at the Guggenheim, Hillings rose through the curatorial ranks and curated more than 15 exhibitions on four continents, among them *RUSSIA!* (2005–6); *Hanne Darboven: Hommage à Picasso* (2006); *Guggenheim Collection: 1940s to Now* (2007); *Picturing America: Photorealism in the 1970s* (2009); *ZERO: Countdown to Tomorrow, 1950s–60s* (2014); and *The Creative Act: Performance, Process, Presence* (2017). *ZERO*, inspired by Hillings’s doctoral thesis, was a 2014 AICA nominee for Best Thematic Show in New York, and the exhibition’s website won a Webby Award. She collaborated with artists including Marina Abramović, El Anatsui, Angela Bulloch, Hanne Darboven, Susan Hefuna, Tomás Saraceno, and Günther Uecker on commissions, exhibitions, and public programs.

Hillings provided curatorial leadership for the Patrons Circle, a high-level Guggenheim membership group, and the Middle Eastern Circle affinity group, which supports acquisitions and programming at the Guggenheim Museum on an annual basis. She also served on the New York museum’s photography acquisition committee.

In 2009 she joined the Guggenheim’s dedicated Abu Dhabi Project staff, tasked with planning for the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, a museum of modern and contemporary art currently under development in the United Arab Emirates in the Saadiyat Cultural District in Abu Dhabi. As curator and associate director of curatorial affairs, Hillings led a team that brought together leading experts in a variety of art historical fields to develop a strategy for originating for the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi a collection of art since the 1960s made around the world in all mediums. She directed a robust acquisitions program, preopening exhibitions, public programs, and publications, realized in partnership with the Department of Culture and Tourism–Abu Dhabi and aimed at developing local audiences and increasing awareness of the future museum.

In addition to her Guggenheim projects, Hillings has published and publicly lectured on curatorial practice and on various topics in post–World War II art history and contemporary art. She served on the jury for the Kandinsky Prize for Russian contemporary art from 2007 to 2009 and the international ZERO Foundation Scientific Board, Düsseldorf, Germany, from 2011 to 2014. From 2014 to 2017, she was a member of the Board of Advisors for the Nasher Museum of Art at Duke University. In 2016 she was a fellow at the Center for Curatorial Leadership in New York.